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Cremer, David de; Dijk, Eric van

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# Leader–Follower Effects in Resource Dilemmas: The Roles of Leadership Selection and Social Responsibility

**David De Cremer**

*Tilburg University*

**Eric van Dijk**

*Leiden University—Institute for Psychological Research*

Previous research on the allocation of scarce resources shows that when people are assigned labels of leader or follower in their group, leaders allocate more of the scarce resources to themselves than followers do. In three laboratory studies, we examine the idea that how people are selected for the leader role (i.e. election or appointment) determines whether leaders take more or equal shares (relative to followers) from a common resource. In a first experiment, we show that participants were more accepting of norm violating behavior by an appointed versus elected leader. In a second experiment, we show that when participants were assigned to a leader or follower role, allocations of appointed leaders differed significantly from those of elected leaders and followers, whereas there was no difference between the two latter conditions. Moreover, elected leaders were shown to feel more social responsibility than both appointed leaders and followers. In a final experiment, we show that when participants were primed with the concept of social responsibility (relative to a neutral condition) no difference in allocations between appointed and elected leaders emerged.

**KEYWORDS** followers, leadership selection, resource allocations, resource dilemmas, social responsibility

WITHIN situations of interdependence, as can be found in groups and organizations, allocation decisions are predominantly made by those in charge (Yukl, 1998). Often, the decisions that these leaders have to take revolve around distributing scarce resources that are much needed to serve the collective and organizational interest (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Mannix, 1993). A striking observation is that leaders frequently benefit themselves at the expense of others when allocating (financial) resources. For example, when being able to fly economy or business

class many business leaders choose the latter option. Or, when allocating resource funding within universities leaders frequently advocate

## **Author's note**

Addressed correspondence to David De Cremer, Department of Psychology, Center of Justice and Social Decision Making (JuST; [www.centerofjust.com](http://www.centerofjust.com)), Tilburg University, P.O. Box 90153, 5000-LE Tilburg, The Netherlands [email: [d.decremer@uvt.nl](mailto:d.decremer@uvt.nl)]

(in implicit and sometimes even explicit ways) larger donations to the department that they are or were affiliated with. Quite often, economic analyses are used to explain such self-serving behavior by those in charge, like, for example, the need for leaders to be tough negotiators and uphold the image of being in power.

Social psychological analyses on the other hand focus on the power of the social setting and its related cognitions. That is, this approach suggests that merely assigning people to higher positions (e.g. providing participants the label leader) may also increase their tendency to put their own interests first. In particular, it may well be that merely assigning people to a leader role by calling them 'the leader' is enough for them to benefit themselves at the expense of others. Such analysis thus relies on the assumption that if a participant is labeled a leader by the experimenter without any additional information about the leader role or task at hand, participants rely on category-consistent information to base their evaluations and decisions on (see Phillips & Lord, 1982). In this case the information they rely on may be the idea that a leader is entitled to pursue privileges and self-interest.

Recent experimental research has empirically documented this social psychological approach by making use of a resource dilemma paradigm in which participants were told that they were the first (out of a group of, for example, six people) to take from the common resource. This position of being the first to take from the resource creates a situation in which no anchoring on other's behavior can take place and as such decisions will thus primarily be determined by one's own conceptions of what constitutes a good and fair decision to oneself (a value that is expected to be colored by how one's position in the group is labeled). These series of laboratory studies in which participants were university students indeed showed that people who were simply labeled leader or supervisor harvested more from a common resource than participants who were assigned a lower hierarchical role by being labeled follower (De Cremer, 2001, 2003a; De Cremer & Van Dijk, 2005; Samuelson & Allison, 1994; Van Dijk & De Cremer, 2006).

A common explanation for this effect is derived from insights of the social cognition literature (e.g. S. T. Fiske, 1993) and equity theory (e.g. Adams, 1965). More precisely, when people are labeled as leader, role schemas are evoked that are consistent with the label leader (cf. Phillips & Lord, 1982) and one such specific schema is the expectation that they deserve more privileges than subordinates do (S. T. Fiske, 1993; Messé, Kerr, & Sattler, 1992). Moreover, being cognitively assigned the leader position also evokes expectations that one will have to put more effort and work into the situation (relative to followers), as such making one feel privileged to receive higher outputs (Adams, 1965; Walster, Berscheid, & Walster, 1973). These explanations thus point out one important process explaining a leader's tendency to take more out of a shared resource than followers do, that is, feeling *entitled* to take more. In support of this argument, De Cremer and Van Dijk (2005) indeed demonstrated that role schemas associated with leadership created a feeling of being entitled to higher outcomes, consequently affecting harvesting behavior (see also De Cremer, 2003a; Stouten, De Cremer, & Van Dijk, 2005; Van Dijk & De Cremer, 2006).

### **Do leaders always take more than followers?**

Of course, from the perspective that leaders are assigned to facilitate contributions to the collective welfare (e.g. De Cremer & Van Vugt, 2002; Tyler & Huo, 2002), treat members in fair and respectful ways (De Cremer, 2003b), and thus display a socially responsible orientation toward the collective and its members (Chemers, 2001; Yukl, 1998), the above research findings may prove unsatisfying and even discouraging. As a matter of fact, in the leadership literature it is acknowledged that the label of leader can make salient ideas of two motives: the idea of being motivated to uphold socially responsible behavior on one hand and being entitled to receive privileges on the other hand. Do we have to conclude that after receiving the label of leader people immediately take the

self-interested perspective of entitlement for granted (cf. Epley & Caruso, 2004, for the idea that self-interest is immediate)? Or, do specific conditions exist making people act in more socially responsible ways when the label leader is allocated to them?

Recent research by Van Dijk and De Cremer (2006) showed that, in line with Keltner, Gruenfeld, and Anderson's (2003) proposition that people in higher positions (e.g. leaders) behave more in accordance with their personality traits, individual differences in social value orientation (Van Lange, 1999) moderate this label effect. That is, participants allocated more from the shared resource to themselves when called leader relative to being called follower, but only when they possessed a prosocial orientation. In contrast, when participants possessed a prosocial orientation no such differences between leaders and followers emerged. These results thus suggest that among certain individuals the distinction in labels between leader and follower may not influence their allocation behavior. Interestingly, research on social value orientation has shown that prosocials differ from proselves, among others, in terms of how socially responsible they feel toward interdependent others (De Cremer & Van Lange, 2001). In this view, social responsibility is perceived as reflecting people's concern for both self and others' interests (motivated by the moral consideration of how one ought to act; A. P. Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998; cf. Cialdini, Kallgren, & Reno, 1991). However, the findings of Van Dijk and De Cremer (2006) did not reveal any evidence that social responsibility was activated in their studies.

Building on the above, we wish to argue that people assigned to the leader role will not solely act in egocentric ways when allocating resources. In the spirit of the Van Dijk and De Cremer (2006) research, we wish to examine which factors moderate the tendency of people to take more from a resource when being assigned to the leader role than when being assigned to the follower role. However, rather than focusing on the impact of individual differences, we now focus on the social influences that may keep leaders from taking more from a common resource than followers from a common resource. It is not

always an easy task to design influence systems aimed at affecting the attitudes and actions of only a few people. From a social psychological perspective, it is more beneficial if we understand how we should label hierarchical positions in such a way that the predicted effect would emerge. Therefore, the present research will complement and move beyond existing research in several ways. First, it will identify one specific social variable affecting the influence of the already established leader-follower distinction on allocation decisions. Second, it will show that this specific social variable may reveal beneficial effects because it evokes thoughts and evaluations of social responsibility.

More precisely, one specific social variable that potentially could influence the effect of leader-follower labels is the procedure underlying leader selection. That is, whether the leader role is assigned via the procedure of *election* or *appointment* (Hollander, 1985) should impact upon the expectations that the label of leader evokes. In the following paragraphs, we will elaborate on the importance of leader selection.

### The role of selection procedures

As mentioned earlier, prior research has often assigned participants to the leader role by simply labeling them as the leader (not providing any further information about the role and its content, which allowed for participants to infer the content of being the leader themselves). However, it is the case that in many group or organizational situations the label of leader is associated with the procedure used to select the leader. Leaders may be imposed on the group by an (external) authority and thus be appointed, without the group having a say in it. On the other hand, groups themselves may elect who they wish to be in charge. Thus, a leader can be called an elected leader or an appointed leader. Will these different labels evoke different cognitive expectations and thus impact differently upon the way leaders evaluate their own role and subsequently act upon it? As Hollander (1985, p. 507) states, 'appointment or election therefore affects a leader's actions'. Moreover,

research has shown that selection of leadership (a) influences perceptions of the quality of the relationship between the group leader and the others (Hollander & Julian, 1970), (b) provides a basis for how leaders will perceive whether continuity of leadership is required and wished for (A. M. Cohen & Bennis, 1961), and (c) creates different social environments consequently affecting the importance of specific types of leadership behaviors (Hollander, 1985, 1992).

With respect to the notion of electing a leader, the group is believed to support one specific person and thus in a way transfers hopes and expectations upon the leader. Indeed, Hollander and Julian (1970) argue that, 'election builds higher demands on the leadership role' (p. 66). Moreover, research by Ben-Yoav, Hollander, and Carnevale (1983) suggests that elected leaders are perceived as more responsive to the needs of followers and the interests of the group. As a result, we argue that an elected leader will create a socially shared expectation that he will do things right and thus act socially responsible and fairly. After all, the notion of election holds that the group has voted for him and thus expects certain indications of reciprocity. Indeed, according to Kenney, Schwartz-Kenney, and Blascovich (1996, p. 1130), people 'have a greater investment in elected leaders and, therefore, have higher performance expectations'. Thus, because an elected leader reflects the choice of the group and its members, an elected leader will feel strong support from the followers who will bestow on the leader a high sense of social responsibility (Julian, Hollander, & Regula, 1969; Kenney et al., 1996). With respect to an appointed leader, things look different. Because such a leader does not 'owe' his/her selection to the group members, the leader may not feel that he/she has to carry the weight of group's expectations to be a fair and socially responsible decision maker. In fact, research suggests that appointed leaders are expected to devote less attention to the needs and interests of the group members (Kenney et al., 1996). Moreover, groups will perceive appointed leaders as less legitimate and expect less from such leaders in terms of performance expectations (see

De Cremer & Van Vugt, 2002; Hollander, 1992; Hollander & Julian, 1970).

Taken together, based on this literature, one could thus suggest that if leaders are appointed, relative to being elected by the group, they will reason less in terms of social responsibility (i.e. being fair and cooperative toward the group and its norms). The inducement of these socially shared expectations (by means of the procedure of election vs. appointment) should therefore affect the decisions of leaders when allocating common resources.

Building on the above, we predict that leader selection and role assignment will interact in determining allocation decisions in such a way that leaders will take more from the common resource than followers do, but mainly when the leader is appointed. In contrast, when the group elects the leader less difference in terms of resource allocations is expected between leaders and followers. Furthermore, it is expected that in the case of being elected by the group, leaders will experience more feelings of social responsibility than those appointed in the leader role. Finally, elaborating on the potential role of social responsibility, we expect that activating the concept of social responsibility may motivate appointed leaders to make similar allocations to those of elected leaders. These predictions will be examined across three experimental studies.

## **Experiment 1**

As we noted earlier, the insights derived from the leadership literature suggest that people have socially-shared norms of what to expect from elected and appointed leaders. These socially-shared norms influence the decisions of leaders (Hollander, 1985). Therefore, in Experiment 1, we first wanted to test whether observers react differently toward norm deviating behavior enacted by an elected leader relative to an appointed leader. More precisely, building on the leadership literature, it should be expected that people have higher expectations of elected leaders (relative to appointed leaders) to do their job in a socially responsible way and thus

to adjust their decisions more to what is seen as normative behavior. Indeed, after having elected the leader, people may feel that they have a vested interest in the decisions that the leader subsequently makes. As such, if the elected leader violates these expectations, e.g. by displaying self-interested behavior, people may react negatively. Interestingly, this prediction is also in line with the idea that leaders elected by the group (relative to appointed leaders) are often seen as being representative of the group's identity and the norms that it advocates. As such, if an elected leader then violates normative allocation behavior (e.g. by taking an equal share from the common resource) this may be experienced as a threat to the group's identity, resulting in followers not accepting this behavior (cf. Haslam et al., 1998).

It is fair to note, however, that an alternative explanation also exists. That is, it could be the case that an elected leader actually has more leeway (instead of less) in making his or her decisions. More precisely, it may also be the case that people will reason that if a leader is elected the group will also award this leader the opportunity to receive some benefits and privileges associated with the leader position. This line of reasoning would then suggest that people would actually accept more easily allocation behavior deviating from what is normatively expected from an elected leader than from an appointed leader.

The selection procedure of the leader was manipulated by informing participants whether the group selected the leader (i.e. election) or whether an outside authority selected the leader (i.e. appointment). Deviation from normative behavior was manipulated by letting the selected leader take an amount similar to what other people usually take (i.e. an equal share of the common resource: 15 euros from a resource of 90 euros) or an amount significantly higher than the equal share (22 euros from a resource of 90 euros). The amount of 15 was chosen because it represents the equality-rule in the present study, whereas the amount of 22 was chosen as it represents the average amount that participants in prior research took from a resource of

90 points when being assigned the leader label (see e.g. De Cremer, 2003a).

### Method

**Participants and design** Ninety-five undergraduate students (average age = 20.98 years) participated voluntarily in exchange for course credits. They were randomly assigned to a 2 (Leader selection: Elected vs. appointed leader)  $\times$  2 (Resource share: 15 vs. 22) between-subjects design.

**Procedure** Upon arrival in the laboratory, participants were placed in a cubicle for the experiment containing a table and a chair. Then, a booklet was given to the participants introducing them to the allocation situation. Participants were asked to evaluate the described situation. Modeled after Van Dijk and De Cremer (2006, Experiment 1), participants were introduced to a description of members of a management team consisting of one leader and three followers. Then, the role manipulation was introduced. In the *elected leader* condition, participants read that the leader was elected by the team to do a good job. In the *appointed leader* condition, participants read that an authority from outside the group appointed the leader to do a good job. In addition, all participants learned that the team had been successful, and that the company had decided to allocate a bonus of 90 payment units to the team. This bonus would be divided by allowing each team member to take the amount they wished from the resource. The leader was said to take first from the bonus. Thereafter, the *resource share* manipulation (i.e. 15 or 22 units) was introduced. Participants read: 'The leader has taken 15/22 units from the bonus. This amount is roughly the same/more as the average amount that people take.'

Finally, the dependent measures of Experiment 1 were solicited. To assess the effectiveness of our resource share manipulation we asked participants how much the leader took from the common resource (which could range from 0 to 90). In addition, participants were also asked whether the leader took more from the bonus than the average amount (1 = *not at all*,

7 = *very much so*). Then, participants were asked to indicate to what extent they considered the leader to be appointed by another party than the group (1 = *not appointed at all*, 7 = *very much appointed*). Subsequently, we examined whether participants accepted the allocation behavior of the leader by asking them to what extent they thought that the choice of the leader was 'defensible' and 'justified' ( $r = .45$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These two items were also responded to on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all defensible/justified*, 7 = *very much defensible/justified*). Finally, participants were debriefed, thanked, and dismissed.

## Results

**Manipulation checks** An analysis of frequencies revealed that in both resource share conditions all the participants (100%) correctly recalled whether the leader took 15 or 22 euros.

Further, a  $2 \times 2$  Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the question whether the leader took more than the average amount only yielded a main effect of Resource share ( $F(1, 91) = 111.59$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .55$ ), showing that the leader was seen as taking more than the average amount in the 22 units relative to the 15 units condition ( $M_s = 5.50$  vs. 2.21).

Further, a  $2 \times 2$  ANOVA on the question to what extent the leader was appointed by another party than the group only yielded a main effect of Leader selection ( $F(1, 91) = 180.09$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .66$ ), showing that an appointed leader was perceived as appointed by an outside authority relative to an elected leader ( $M_s = 6.23$  vs. 2.16).

**Acceptance** A  $2 \times 2$  ANOVA on the acceptance score revealed, first of all, a significant effect

of Resource share ( $F(1, 91) = 131.95$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .59$ ), indicating that a share of 15 units was accepted more than a share of 22 units ( $M_s = 6.22$  vs. 3.67). Also, a significant interaction emerged ( $F(1, 91) = 7.31$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .07$ ) (see Table 1). The effect of Leader election was significant within the 22 unit condition ( $F(1, 91) = 9.53$ ,  $p < .01$ ), but not within the 15 unit condition ( $F(1, 91) < 1$ ,  $p < .35$ ).

## Experiment 2

The results of Experiment 1 show that people were more accepting of normative deviating behavior by an appointed than by an elected leader. This finding suggests that people place higher demands on the shoulders of elected leaders (relative to appointed ones) and expect them to act more socially responsible (Hollander, 1992; Hollander & Julian, 1970; Kenney et al., 1996). Although this first evidence is supportive of our line of reasoning, it has to be noted that Experiment 1 only tested people's evaluations toward leaders as a function of how they were selected. Therefore, we also have to examine whether leaders themselves act according to their roles (and associated expectations).

In Experiment 2, participants will receive the label of elected leader, appointed leader or follower and they will have to decide in an actual resource task how much to take from the common resource. Importantly, in this common resource task, participants' decisions will be anonymous. The reason for this is that (based on the findings of Experiment 1) elected leaders might act in socially appropriate ways and thus strategically conform to the socially shared expectations of others. Making decisions anonymously should not elicit such social

Table 1. Means of acceptance of the leader's choice as a function of leader selection and resource share (Experiment 1)

Leader selection	Resource share	
	15	22
Appointed	6.06 (0.95, $n = 17$ )	4.11 (1.26, $n = 28$ )
Elected	6.39 (0.82, $n = 22$ )	3.23 (1.05, $n = 28$ )

Notes: Entries represent the acceptance score on a 7-point scale, with higher values indicating higher acceptance. Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations and number of participants per cell.

reputation concerns and would allow us to test directly the kind of behaviors the label of leader and follower elicits. In fact, if elected leaders under anonymous conditions take less than appointed leaders and equally as much as followers, this would be supportive of the notion that these leader types have internalized social responsibility thoughts. In line with this idea, we will also test whether elected leadership not only evokes expectations of social responsibility among observers (as suggested in Experiment 1) but also among people allocated to the elected leader position by assessing their feelings of social responsibility.

### Method

**Participants and design** Sixty-six undergraduate students (average age = 20.42 years) participated voluntarily in exchange for course credits. They were randomly assigned to one of the three selection procedure conditions (appointed leader, elected leader, or follower).

**Procedure** Upon arrival in the laboratory, participants were placed in a cubicle for the experiment containing a table and a chair. Then, a booklet was given to participants introducing them to the allocation situation that they would participate in. Participants learned that they were members of a four-person group, but that they would not learn their fellow group members' identities.

Participants learned that their group possessed a collective resource of 90 points, which had a financial value (a total of 9 euros). Then, it was explained that the group had to decide how to divide the resource. More precisely, it was said that each group member had to decide how many of these points he or she would allocate to themselves. Participants could keep the points (and earned financial value) that they allocated to themselves. In line with previous research on the role assignment effect (i.e. De Cremer & Van Dijk, 2005; Samuelson & Allison, 1994), it was further said that the decisions would be taken sequentially, that is, one decision after another decision. Moreover, participants were informed that it would be decided randomly which group member would be the first to take from the

resource, which member second, and so forth. Thus, after the decision of the first member, the collective resource would be adjusted (i.e. the collective resource would be reduced with the number of the points that the first member allocated to him/herself) and again after the choice of the second member, and so forth. All participants were informed that they were the first to take from the common resource.

After participants were acquainted with the main characteristics of the resource dilemma, the manipulation of position was induced. Following previous research (e.g. Samuelson & Allison, 1994), participants in the *appointed leader condition* learned that the experimenter had decided to choose them as the group member occupying the position of leader, and that the others would occupy the position of follower. In the *follower condition*, participants learned that the experimenter had decided that they would occupy the role of follower (see De Cremer & Van Dijk, 2005). In the *elected leader condition*, participants were told that each group member would be asked who to elect as the leader (based on the scores of the participants on personality questionnaires that had to be filled out at the beginning of the experimental session). Then, participants were asked to wait for a few moments because another group members' opinion would be asked first. After a while, they were told that they did not have to give their opinion anymore because the other group members had all indicated that they wanted the focal participant to be the leader.

Then, the dependent measures of Experiment 2 were solicited. First, participants were asked to which role they were assigned (1 = *appointed leader*, 2 = *elected leader*). Thereafter, participants were requested to take from the common resource (ranging from 0 to 90). Finally, participants were asked to what extent they felt social responsibility toward the others in the present situation (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much so*), before being debriefed, thanked, and dismissed.

### Results

**Manipulation checks** An analysis of frequencies revealed that in both leader conditions and



in the follower condition all the participants (100%) correctly recalled which role they were assigned to.

**Resource allocation** A one-way ANOVA on the resource allocation score revealed a significant effect of Role ( $F(2, 62) = 4.13, p < .05, \eta^2 = .12$ ). A Least-Significant Differences Test showed that participants allocated significantly more to themselves in the leader appointed condition ( $M = 30.65$ ) than in the leader elected by the group ( $M = 23.57, p < .05$ ) and follower conditions ( $M = 23.54, p < .05$ ). The two latter conditions did not differ from each other ( $p < .99$ ).

**Feelings of social responsibility** A one-way ANOVA on the social responsibility score revealed a significant effect of Role ( $F(2, 63) = 4.06, p < .05, \eta^2 = .11$ ). A Least-Significant Differences Test showed that participants in the leader elected by the group ( $M = 5.90$ ) felt more socially responsible than those in leader appointed ( $M = 5.04, p < .05$ ) and follower conditions ( $M = 4.72, p < .005$ ). The two latter conditions did not differ significantly ( $p < .46$ ).

## Experiment 3

As expected, the results of Experiment 2 showed that the procedure used to select the leader significantly influenced resource allocations. More precisely, leaders appointed by the experimenter significantly allocated more resources to themselves than followers, as such paralleling earlier research showing that leaders take more from a common resource than followers do (e.g. De Cremer, 2003a; De Cremer & Van Dijk, 2005; Van Dijk & De Cremer, 2006). Importantly, however, when the group elected the leader, participants occupying the leader role did not take more from the resource than followers. In addition, the findings of Experiment 2 also provided evidence that participants assigned to the elected leader role felt more socially responsible than when assigned to the appointed leader role or follower role.

Thus, so far our findings suggest that the allocations of elected leaders are similar to those of

followers' allocations and that the allocations of appointed leaders deviate significantly from the others. This observation may suggest that the conclusions derived from previous research that leaders make more self-serving allocation decisions than followers (De Cremer & Van Dijk, 2005; Van Dijk & De Cremer, 2006) may only be applicable to appointed leaders. Therefore, to examine more closely what it is about leadership and allocation decisions we need to identify when appointed leaders make similar allocation decisions to elected leaders. Following from the leadership literature (Hollander & Julian, 1970; Kenney et al., 1996) and the findings of Experiment 2 it may be suggested that elected leadership is characterized by a strong conception of social responsibility. If this is the case, then it could be expected that reinforcing such a conception of social responsibility among appointed leaders would motivate them to act more in line with the allocation decisions made by elected leaders. Experiment 3 was designed to test this question.

To test this relationship we rely on social cognition insights noting that once a specific concept (in this case social responsibility) is made accessible, associated concepts such as other-orientation and prosocial behavior should be activated, which indicates that they serve as interpretative frames in the subsequent phases of the experiment (Higgins, 1996; Neely, 1977). That is, we argue that using an accessibility technique where participants write about and reflect upon the concept of social responsibility activates other-oriented concerns, which will then direct subsequent allocation behavior. This effect is expected to primarily emerge among those leader types where social responsibility initially is less salient, that is, appointed leaders. As such, no difference in allocation behavior between elected and appointed leaders is expected when social responsibility is reinforced. In the neutral condition, we also asked participants to actively describe a neutral concept, as we wanted to avoid the case that the difference between the social responsibility condition and the neutral condition could also be explained by having asked participants to do something in the former condition and to do nothing in

the latter condition. Therefore, we used a task that has been shown to elicit neutral thoughts and affect; that is, we asked participants to describe the qualities of a chair (taken from Schwinghammer, Stapel, & Blanton, 2006). In this condition, the difference in allocations between elected and appointed leaders (as demonstrated in Experiment 2) is expected to emerge.

### Method

**Participants and design** Sixty-nine undergraduate students (average age = 20.80 years) participated voluntarily in exchange for course credits. They were randomly assigned to a 2 (Accessibility: Social responsibility vs. chair)  $\times$  2 (Leader Selection: Appointment vs. election) between-subjects factorial design.

**Experimental procedure** Upon arrival in the laboratory, participants were placed in a cubicle for the experiment containing a table and a chair. The same procedure as in Experiment 2 was followed. Again, participants were told to be part of a group of four people and that each group member would have to make an allocation decision. Again, a common resource of 90 points was available for the group to allocate. As in Experiment 2, it was said that the decision of how much to take from the common resource would be sequential. All participants, however, were supposedly chosen randomly to be the first to take from the common resource (see also Allison & Messick, 1990; De Cremer, 2003a; De Cremer & Van Dijk, 2005; Samuelson & Allison, 1994, for a similar procedure). Contrary to Experiment 2, the following changes were implemented. First of all, in Experiment 3, participants were only allocated to the leader appointment or leader election condition. The selection procedure was the same as in Experiment 2. A second modification was that while participants were waiting to receive information about their role in the group, they were supposedly asked to participate in a short unrelated task. This filler task constituted the priming procedure aimed at making accessible the concept of social responsibility or the concept of a

chair (= neutral condition; cf. Schwinghammer et al., 2006). More precisely, participants wrote down either a description of the concept social responsibility or a description of a chair. They wrote a detailed description of this situation on a separate sheet for 3 minutes. After this, we assessed participants' mood (i.e. how happy do you feel at the moment?), and feelings of social responsibility (i.e. the extent to which they experienced a prosocial attitude toward others).

Then, the dependent measures of Experiment 3 were solicited. To check for the effectiveness of the leadership selection manipulation, participants were first asked whether they were allocated the role of leader (1 = *yes*, 2 = *no*). Then, they were asked whether the experimenter allocated them the position of leader (1 = *yes*, 2 = *no*). Subsequently, they were asked whether the group had decided which role they would take (1 = *yes*, 2 = *no*). Thereafter, participants were requested to take from the common resource. Finally, participants were debriefed, thanked, and dismissed.

### Results

**Manipulation checks** To check for the validity of our prime manipulation, it was first checked whether participants actually wrote down any thoughts in the accessibility manipulation. After this was checked, seven participants who wrote nothing were removed from the analyses. Then, we conducted an inter-rater reliability analysis (J. Cohen, 1968). More precisely, two judges coded whether the participants wrote down a recall of the concept of social responsibility or of the concept chair depending on the experimental condition that the participants were allocated to, resulting in high inter-rater agreement (Cohen's Kappa = .84).

Further, a 2  $\times$  2 ANOVA, on the question to what extent they had a prosocial attitude toward others in the present situation, only revealed a marginal significant effect of Accessibility ( $F(1, 58) = 3.63, p = .06, \eta^2 = .06$ ), showing that participants in the social responsibility condition experienced stronger feelings of prosocial attitudes toward others than those in the chair condition ( $M_s = 6.03$  vs. 5.49).

Because prior research has shown that accessibility methods may influence mood (Sedikides, 1995), consequently influencing the effect of the accessibility method on the dependent measure under investigation, we asked participants to indicate how happy they felt (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). A  $2 \times 2$  ANOVA on the happiness item revealed no significant effects of Accessibility ( $F(1, 57) = 3.20, p < .08$ ), Leader selection ( $F(1, 57) < 1, p < .10$ ), nor the Interaction ( $F(1, 57) < 1, p < .99$ ). As such, our accessibility method did not influence participants' positive mood, suggesting that we do not have to control for this variable in our main analyses. Overall, we can conclude that our prime manipulation was successful.

To see whether our selection procedure manipulation was successful, we first of all conducted an analysis of frequencies on the question whether participants were allocated the role of leader showing that all participants responded with yes. Further, an analysis of frequency on the question whether the experimenter appointed the role of leader showed that in the elected leader condition 100% of the participants responded with no, whereas in the appointed leader condition 78% responded with the option yes. Finally, another analysis of frequency on the question whether the group selected the role showed that in the elected leader condition 97% of the participants responded with yes, whereas in the appointed leader condition 94% responded with the option no.

**Resource allocation** A  $2 \times 2$  ANOVA on the resource allocation score revealed only a significant interaction between Accessibility and Leader selection ( $F(1, 58) = 4.22, p < .05$ ,

$\eta^2 = .07$ ) (see Table 2). The means in Table 2 clearly show that appointed leaders in the chair prime condition harvested by far the highest resource shares. Simple effect tests indeed show that Leader selection revealed a significant effect among those in the chair condition ( $F(1, 58) = 4.67, p < .05$ ), but not in the social responsibility condition ( $F(1, 58) = .44, p < .51$ ).

## General discussion

Taken together, the present results are supportive of our prediction that the manner used to select leaders may significantly influence how leaders make allocation decisions in common resource dilemmas. In identifying this effect of the selection procedure the role of social responsibility was further explored. In the following paragraphs, we will discuss the most important findings.

The first finding of importance is that the procedure used to allocate people to a leader position within an interdependent resource situation significantly influences the impact that the label leader has on how observers evaluate the allocation decisions made by the leader. First of all, in Experiment 1 it was found that deviating behavior by an appointed leader was accepted more than similar deviating behavior by an elected leader. These findings are supportive of earlier leadership research suggesting that the selection procedure significantly affects the leadership process, in the eyes of both observers and the leader himself (Hollander & Julian, 1970; Julian et al., 1969). That is, following these theories, elected leadership should be associated with the notion of social responsibility, because elected leaders are expected to display socially

Table 2. Means of resources allocated to oneself as a function of accessibility and leadership selection procedure (Experiment 3)

Leadership selection procedure	Accessibility	
	Social responsibility	Chair
Appointed	25.13 (5.24, $n = 15$ )	36.32 (22.54, $n = 17$ )
Elected	28.36 (12.31, $n = 19$ )	24.54 (5.06, $n = 11$ )

Notes: Entries are allocations ranging from 0 to 90, with higher values indicating higher allocations to oneself. Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations and number of participants per cell.

appropriate and normative behavior. In contrast, appointed leaders have a less clearly defined expectation pattern and as such may have more leeway in making their decisions.

Importantly, however, the findings of Experiment 2 showed that the ideas that observers use to evaluate those called leader also seem to operate among those individuals placed in the respective leader role. Indeed, elected leaders acted more socially responsible than appointed leaders, whereas there was no difference in allocations between elected leaders and followers. The fact that this effect was found in a decision-making situation under which decisions were anonymous testifies to the idea that individuals also internalized these expectations and thus do not solely display these types of behavior to conform to the expectations of the others. Finally, our results also revealed direct evidence that the notion of social responsibility (as advocated by Hollander, 1985) seems to play a role when explaining allocation differences between elected and appointed leaders. In Experiment 2 it was found that elected leaders felt more socially responsible toward others relative to appointed leaders and followers. In addition, in Experiment 3, it was further shown that if the concept of social responsibility was made accessible the allocations of appointed leaders were not different from the allocations of those among whom social responsibility is already a salient issue, that is, elected leaders.

All in all, these findings complement prior research showing that if individuals are allocated to the leader role they (under certain circumstances) allocate more resources to themselves relative to when being allocated to the follower role (De Cremer, 2003a; De Cremer & Van Dijk, 2005; Samuelson & Allison, 1994; Stouten et al., 2005; Van Dijk & De Cremer, 2006). However, the present findings qualify and go beyond this observation in a variety of ways. First, the present findings demonstrate that these prior research findings only apply to leaders that are appointed by an external authority. Indeed, when the group elects the leader then resource allocations are not different anymore from the one that followers make. Second, prior research only focused on the self-interested side of allocation

behavior by identifying feelings of entitlement as the explanatory factor of the difference in allocations between leaders and followers. The present research, however, adopted a perspective in which the role of social responsibility was explored. After all, it is clear that leaders are not only expected to take up the privileges associated with the leader role but also to take charge of the group in ways that benefit the welfare of the group; thus, to display fair and socially responsible behavior (Lord, Foti, & de Vader, 1984; Yukl, 1998). As such, the present research is the first (at least to our knowledge) to show when this social responsibility side of leadership is most likely to come into play when allocating resources.

Thus, an important conclusion that can be derived from the present findings is that it suggests that when it comes to the allocation of scarce resources, conclusions that leadership may bring out the 'worst' in people (i.e. self-benefiting behavior) are not necessarily accurate. Indeed, the current findings now suggest that the reported increase in self-benefiting allocations, as shown in prior research, does not really emerge when the leader is elected (then allocations are similar to those of followers). Interesting to note in this respect, however, is that our findings in Experiment 2 showed that elected leaders felt more socially responsible than *both* appointed leaders and followers. Thus, elected leaders did show less self-interested behavior than appointed leaders and both leader types differed in how socially responsible they felt, but although elected leaders and followers made equal allocation decisions they also differed in feelings of social responsibility. This finding therefore emphasizes the importance of paying closer attention to the role of followers and what exactly makes followers act so prosocially. It seems clear that other psychological processes may be involved than in the process of elected leadership and therefore we urge future research to explore this question in greater depth.

The present findings may also have important implications for the management of common resources and managers' knowledge. First of all, our research findings suggest that providing employees with job or status labels does not seem

entirely without problems. Calling people a leader or a follower may activate expectations consistent with each of these labels, consequently affecting their behaviors within the group or organization. This cognitive effect is especially important to take into account at the managerial level where managers may reason that self-favoring behavior is legitimate. As such, promotion decisions and decisions to re-label people's positions or roles should not go without an analysis accounting for its possible behavioral consequences. In fact, because in organizations a view is endorsed that leader figures take care of the welfare of the organization, it is important for organizations to be aware that cognitive effects such as leader labels may actually have opposite effects.

One reason why organizations may be unaware of the effects of these cognitive effects is that this kind of perspective treats leadership as a relatively narrow concept (i.e. identifying it as a label that people use), whereas in organizations leadership is defined in broader terms including important behaviors and beliefs. More precisely, this broader notion of leadership includes a stronger focus on how leaders develop and maintain relationships with their followers through their actions. For example, with respect to the relational aspects of leadership research has shown that leaders displaying self-sacrifice (e.g. De Cremer & Van Knippenberg, 2002) or even servant behaviors (e.g. Greenleaf & Spears, 2002) develop trusting and trustworthy relationships. Despite the fact that our narrow focus on leadership can be considered a limitation when looking at the ecological validity of our studies, the present results nevertheless provide useful insights even when looked at from a broader perspective on leadership. More precisely, our findings concerning elected leadership convey a rather optimistic message for actual leadership effects—namely that elected leaders (relative to appointed leaders) seem to act as good models. Recent research on the importance of charismatic leadership indicates that leaders showing self-benefiting behavior are perceived as less efficient and charismatic because these behaviors may model unfair behavior for others (De Cremer, 2002; De Cremer & Van

Knippenberg, 2002). Elected leaders, however, do show constraint (at least to the same extent as followers) and may therefore be perceived as more efficient, charismatic, and fair authority figures; all perceptions that enhance the legitimacy of the leader (Tyler, 2006). In turn, legitimacy makes followers accept the allocation decisions made by the leader more easily. Future research may thus further elaborate on the relationship between elected leadership perceptions, legitimacy, and the willingness of followers to support this type of leader.

The suggestion that elected leaders are evaluated as more legitimate may also reveal interesting links with the notion of power. That is, some recent research has shown that those high in power (relative to low) may feel more socially responsible and act more fairly and less prejudiced (see Vescio, Gervais, Heidenreich, & Snyder, 2006). Because we argue that elected leaders may feel more socially responsible, one could hypothesize that maybe they also feel more powerful. Future research should thus examine the relationship between the cognitive label of elected leadership, feelings of power and social responsibility and its effects on the willingness to act more prosocially.

Having raised all possible implications of the present findings one may still note that the artificial nature of our experimental set-up and the absence of feeling of belonging to an actual organizational group represents an important limitation. Therefore, we are, of course, aware that the practical implications outlined must be tempered by also being aware of the obvious limitations that we mentioned. It is clear that issues such as generalizability are important to draw implications for organizational life and therefore we also need studies with high external and ecological validity. However, it is fair to note that a large body of research in real work settings suffers from the problem of having to demonstrate causal relationships, and, as such, is limited in being able to provide a strong theoretical and controllable explanation for the phenomena under investigation. Experimental setups may be a first step in developing and testing specific theoretical predictions, which at the same time

can be highly relevant to organizational settings as well, before examining whether the same processes emerge in real-life settings.

Taken together, the current findings shed more light on the apparent pervasiveness of the enhancement of self-interest by those in higher positions (see e.g. De Cremer & Van Dijk, 2005) by showing that the emergence of this effect depends on how the leader is selected. When people are elected to a leader position then the concept of social responsibility is brought into play, making allocations less self-interested. In the case of appointed leadership, the concept of social responsibility seems to remain relatively silent unless made salient. Viewed this way, selection procedures may be the qualifying factor that can bring the two faces of leadership (i.e. entitlement versus social responsibility) to life.

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## Biographical notes

DAVID DE CREMER is professor of social psychology  
at Leiden University and guest professor at  
Ghent University. He is the recipient of the  
EAESP Jos Jaspers Early Career Award for

outstanding contributions to social psychology,  
Comenius Early Career Award of the European  
Federation of Psychology, and Early Career  
Award of the International Social Justice  
Research Association. His current research  
interests include social/organizational justice,  
trust repair, leadership and power, social  
decision making, and behavioral ethics.

ERIC VAN DIJK is a professor of social psychology at  
Leiden University. His current interests include  
risky decision making, social decision making,  
social dilemmas, and bargaining.